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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/019,872	04/02/2002	Jean-Pierre Blareau	33339/242251	8072

826 7590 07/26/2007

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EXAMINER

DAVIS, RUTH A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1651

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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07/26/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/019,872

Applicant(s)

BLAREAU ET AL.

Examiner

Ruth A. Davis

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 May 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7-10 and 12-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14 and 15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7-10,12-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Applicant's Request for Continued Examination, amendment and response filed on May 8, 2007 and April 3, 2007 respectively, have been received and entered into the case. Claims 1 – 5, 7 – 10 and 12 – 15 are pending and have been considered on the merits. All arguments have been fully considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claims 1 – 5, 7 – 10 and 12 – 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

The claims are drawn to a composition that is made by bioconversion of a substrate with bacteria, however the claims require that the bacteria are not live. Thus, the method by which bioconversion occurs is not enabled.

3. Claims 1 – 5, 7 – 10 and 12 – 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter

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which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The claims are drawn to a milk product that does not contain live Bifidobacteria. However the specification fails to disclose such a product. While a product that does not contain live bacteria is described, the limitation of "does not include live Bifidobacteria" is not supported. This is a new matter rejection.

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1 – 5, 7 – 10 and 12 – 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1 and its dependents are drawn to a milk product, however are rendered vague and indefinite because it is unclear how a product can undergo bioconversion with bacteria that is not live.

The claims are further indefinite because it is unclear if the composition contains live or dead bacteria.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1 – 5, 7 – 10 and 12 – 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Steven (US 4853146).

Applicant claims an immunostimulant milk product, that is obtained by a bioconversion of a milk substrate with Bifidobacteria under conditions unfavorable to fermentation by the bacteria, and sterilizing and/or desiccating the milk product formed, wherein the product does not contain live Bifidobacteria. During conversion, there are about 10^7 – 10^9 CFU per ml milk substrate, and the final population is from 10^5 – 10^9 CFU per ml product; the pH of the substrate is about 6.3 – 7 and the final product pH of about 6 – 7; the substrate is in contact with the bacteria for about 6 – 7 hours; and the strain of Bifidobacterium is CNCM I-2219. Specifically, the milk product is a food product that is dehydrated.

Stevens teaches a milk product composition that is sterilized, does not contain live Bifidobacteria, and has a pH of 6 – 7 (abstract). The product can be powdered (dehydrated) or dehydrated (abstract, claims).

Although Stevens does not teach the claimed method by which the product is made, these limitations are considered to be product by process type limitations. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the claimed product is the same or obvious from a product in the prior art (i.e. the product disclosed in the cited reference), the

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claim is unpatentable even though the reference product was made by a different process. When the prior art discloses a product which reasonably appears to be identical with or slightly different than the claimed product-by-process, rejections under 35 U.S.C 102 and/or 35 U.S.C 103 are proper. (MPEP 2113) In addition, while Stevens does not specifically identify the product is immunostimulatory, the products appear to be the same. Thus, the composition of Stevens must also, inherently be immunostimulatory.

Therefore, the reference anticipates the claimed subject matter.

Response to Arguments

Applicant argues that the references do not teach the compositions comprising unviable Bifidobacteria.

However, in light of the rejection above, this argument is not found persuasive.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ruth A. Davis whose telephone number is 571-272-0915. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00 -3:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Wityshyn can be reached on 571-272-0926. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ruth A. Davis/
Primary Examiner
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July 20, 2007